

SENATE RECORD VOTE ANALYSIS

104th Congress
2nd Session

Vote No. 196

July 17, 1996, 5:40 pm
Page S-7989 Temp. Record

DEFENSE APPROPRIATIONS/Marine Corps Generals

SUBJECT: Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1997 . . . S. 1894. Stevens motion to table the Grassley amendment No. 4891.

ACTION: MOTION TO TABLE AGREED TO, 79-21

SYNOPSIS:

As reported, S. 1894, the Department of Defense Appropriations Bill for fiscal year 1997, will appropriate \$244.74 billion for the military functions of the Department of Defense for fiscal year (FY) 1997, which is \$10.2 billion more than requested and \$1.33 billion more than the FY 1996 funding level.

The Grassley amendment would prohibit using funds from this Act to support more than 68 generals on active duty in the Marine Corps (the Defense Authorization bill as it passed the Senate contained an authorization to increase the number of Marine Corps generals from the current 68 to 80).

During debate, Senator Stevens moved to table the Grassley amendment. The motion to table is not debatable; however, some debate preceded the making of the motion. Generally, those favoring the motion to table opposed the amendment; those opposing the motion to table favored the amendment.

Those favoring the motion to table contended:

We oppose the Grassley amendment for both procedural and policy reasons. The Defense Authorization bill which the Senate recently passed authorized an increase of 12 generals for the Marine Corps. That bill is now in conference, and the issue of how many generals to authorize is under discussion. In our opinion, we should let this issue be decided in conference. The Appropriations Committee does not ordinarily deal with the allocation of funds between officers and the enlisted corps. The only times that it does is when the Armed Services Committee asks it to take specific steps. Force structure issues have always before been left with the Armed Services Committee. As a matter of policy, our understanding is that this increase is justified. The Marine Corps has only

(See other side)

YEAS (79)				NAYS (21)		NOT VOTING (0)	
Republican (44 or 83%)		Democrats (35 or 74%)		Republicans (9 or 17%)	Democrats (12 or 26%)	Republicans (0)	Democrats (0)
Abraham	Hutchison	Akaka	Inouye	Brown	Bingaman		
Ashcroft	Inhofe	Baucus	Johnston	Faircloth	Boxer		
Bennett	Jeffords	Biden	Kennedy	Grams	Conrad		
Bond	Kempthorne	Bradley	Kerrey	Grassley	Dorgan		
Burns	Kyl	Breaux	Kerry	Gregg	Feingold		
Campbell	Lott	Bryan	Leahy	Kassebaum	Harkin		
Chafee	Lugar	Bumpers	Levin	Pressler	Kohl		
Coats	Mack	Byrd	Lieberman	Specter	Lautenberg		
Cochran	McCain	Daschle	Mikulski	Thompson	Pryor		
Cohen	McConnell	Dodd	Moseley-Braun		Simon		
Coverdell	Murkowski	Exon	Moynihan		Wellstone		
Craig	Nickles	Feinstein	Murray		Wyden		
D'Amato	Roth	Ford	Nunn				
DeWine	Santorum	Glenn	Pell				
Domenici	Shelby	Graham	Reid				
Frahm	Simpson	Heflin	Robb				
Frist	Smith	Hollings	Rockefeller				
Gorton	Snowe		Sarbanes				
Gramm	Stevens						
Hatch	Thomas						
Hatfield	Thurmond						
Helms	Warner						

EXPLANATION OF ABSENCE:

- 1—Official Business
- 2—Necessarily Absent
- 3—Illness
- 4—Other

SYMBOLS:

- AY—Announced Yea
- AN—Announced Nay
- PY—Paired Yea
- PN—Paired Nay

1 general for every 2,558 Marines. In contrast, the Air Force ratio is 1 to 1,380, the Army ratio is 1 to 1,552, and the Navy ratio is 1 to 2,143. Historically, the Marine Corps has had a leaner command structure. However, two recent changes make it necessary for it to increase the number of generals it has, even though its enlisted ranks are shrinking. First, efforts are being made to have more integrated commands. Under the Goldwater-Nichols legislation, the services are to work on developing joint commands and operations. When the other services put these commands together they have roughly the same number of officers, but there is a shortage of Marine officers, especially at the service headquarters. Most Marine Corps generals are in field commands. Thus, unless we increase the number of Marine Corps generals or take them away from their field commands, the Marine Corps will be left out of joint command decisions involving them. The second policy reason for increasing the number of Marine generals is that warfare has become much more complex due to advances in technology. The Marines can no longer operate with a very lean command structure. They need more generals. We are not wedded to an increase of 12 generals, or to even any increase at all. If the conferees on the Defense Authorization bill decide that no increase is warranted, we will be very interested in hearing their arguments. Until that time, though, we do not think this issue should be considered. Therefore, we urge our colleagues to table the Grassley amendment.

Those opposing the motion to table contended:

The Armed Services have been cut drastically since 1987. At the same time, the number of general officers in every service except for the Marine Corps has dropped by an average of 20 percent. The Army, for instance, went from 400 generals to less than 300. In the Marine corps, though, the number of generals has been cut by only 2--from 70 to 68. In contrast, the number of enlisted Marine Corps personnel has dropped from 199,525 to 172,434. Given these facts, we were wary of the request on the defense authorization bill for an increase in the number of Marine Corps generals. We did not understand why the United States needed more generals to boss around fewer Marines. Instead of pressing the issue, though, we agreed to give proponents of the increase time to prepare a justification for it. They have made that justification, and we do not find it compelling, so we have offered the Grassley amendment to block funding for 12 additional generals. Some of our colleagues have suggested that it is inappropriate for us to offer this amendment. They have suggested that the matter is one for the authorizing committees to decide. Our colleagues are wrong; authorization bills do not provide funding; they only detail what may be funded. The purpose of appropriations bills is to determine which authorized items will and which authorized items will not be funded. The Grassley amendment is clearly appropriate. The only real question before the Senate is if it is justified as a matter of policy. We believe that it is. Three basic policy rationales have been given for increasing the number of generals. First, Senators have said that they are needed in order to have enough generals available to fill slots on joint commands, as required under the Goldwater-Nichols legislation. This rationale is somewhat surprising, considering that the purpose of that reform bill was to consolidate the services to get rid of wasteful, overlapping commands, headquarters, operations, and equipment. Somehow, it seems to us as though the purpose may be getting a little bit lost if the bill is implemented by hiring a whole slew of new generals who will sit on the joint commands. We think a better idea would be to eliminate existing redundancies in the command structures of the services. For example, the Marine corps has four layers of command headquarters for the 2d Marine Division and Air Wing in North Carolina, when clearly one would do. The second rationale, which has been given by the Marine Corps, is that the generals are needed to fill vacant war-fighting positions. Interestingly, our colleagues on the Armed Services Committee dispute this claim. Our colleagues are correct. We have the list of positions which the Marine Corps would like to fill. Only a couple of the positions could be remotely called war-fighting positions, and only one of them is currently vacant. The third rationale that has been stated is that war has become much more complex, so more generals are needed to command the troops. This argument would carry more weight with us if the other services were also increasing the number of their generals, but they are not. The other services are cutting brass as they cut the rank and file--the Marine Corps should do the same. The Grassley amendment should not be tabled.